DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Division of Simplified Practice

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TURNOVER AND SIMPLIFICATION

The rapidity of turnover is the life of business. If turnover is impeded or slowed up, business is crippled or dies.

Often in this circulation system of business there are leaks or impediments which are not readily traceable yet which seriously affect progress and cut profits to the vanishing point.

These hidden handicaps are due in many cases to too much variety, which results in needlessly large investments, lost motion and wasted material.

Simplification, as developed by industries with the cooperation of the Division of Simplified Practice, is one of the best means of revealing such conditions. Sales analyses, bases on actual deman, show where lie the slow-moving, the obsolete, the freak or odd size commodities which constitute some of the stumbling blocks in any line. These analyses and surveys are the diagnosis of business life.

Simplified Practice has been declared by a group of leading business executives of the country to be one of the ten most important factors in modern business administration.

How this test and this service can be applied to your business will be outlined on request by the Division of Simplified Practice, which will also gladly give information as to its procedure and as to the progress and results in industries where Simplified Practice has been achieved.

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Studies made by the Division of the diverse sizes of motor license plates and brackets have been taken up by the Eastern Conference of Motor Vehicle Administrators, and a committee on simplification and standardization is considering possible action. This committee's report will be taken up at a meeting of the Conference next month.

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Because of the increasing use of taper roller bearings, a number of manufacturers indicated to the Division their belief that fewer sizes would satisfy ordinary needs. A meeting of the manufacturers and users, with representatives from the Society of Automotive Engineers began a study of the problem on June 15.

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The Division has established further contact with educational institutions. Thirty seven colleges and universities have asked to be placed on the permanent mailing lists of the Division for material which will be of interest to their students, from among whom many future executives of industry will come. In addition to a lecture by Mr. A.E. Foote of the Division before the Harvard School of Business Administration, Mr. R.M. Hudson, Chief of the Division, spoke last month before business classes of Washington University, St. Louis.

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Simplification has direct benefits for buyer as well as producer and distributor. Economies accruing to the last-named must be shared with the buyer where there is competition. Improved quality, better service and greater ease of maintenance are some of the consumer's benefits. In recognition of this, ten overseas offices of the Bureau of Foreign & Domestic Commerce have declared their intention of emphasizing to foreign buyers of American goods the advantages of buying "simplified lines".

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Along the same line, attention of members of the Savings Bank Division of the American Bankers Association is being directed through State secretaries to the benefits, and to the influence which purchasing organizations can exert toward the promotion of simplification as a modern form of thrift.

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The National Association of Purchasing Agents is being asked to survey opportunities or fields for simplification as seen from the viewpoint of the consumer. The National Machinery and Supply Distributors Association has been asked to undertake a similar action from the angle of the distributor. The government through Col. H.C. Smither, Chief Coordinator, U.S. Bureau of the Budget, is to carry on a like study as related to government requirements.

With these surveys in hand, added to the 1,000 opportunities already outlined by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, there will be a guide for directing future simplification efforts in fields that promise the greatest good to the greatest number.

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Formal acceptance of the Standard Inquiry, Purchase Order and Invoice Forms, adopted at a general conference early this year, is being received in large numbers. To date more than 20 trade associations, 32 railroads, 95 individual companies, supply houses and others have written to the Division enclosing their pledge to use their best efforts for the achievement of simplification in these important business documents. The letters indicate a keen desire to end the annoyances, the costly misunderstandings and other handicaps from lack of uniformity in this field.

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Reduction in sizes and brands of grocery paper bags from 6280 to 4700 was adopted by a general conference of manufacturers, the paper trade and consumers on May 26th. Fixing of standards of cubical contents for bags of nominal sizes was a feature of the program which is being presented to the Bureau of Standards for formal approval and for permission

to use an emblem on each bag made in the standard size.

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Paint and varnish brush makers, distributors and users meeting on May 22 adopted a program eliminating 342 of the 480 sizes of those commodities now made. Hardware retailers, master painters and others indorsed the program as a long step toward economy.

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Simplification of hack saw blades cannot be completed, the Division has been informed, because such a program could not become effective unless supported by important concerns which have declined to participate. A number of manufacturers had developed a program of elimination, but unless action could be unanimous, further efforts would be fruitless, it was decided.

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Ten thousand copies of recommendations of manufacturers as to simplified thicknesses of box board, set up and folding boxes have been sent to members of 35 national shipper organizations as a preliminary to final conference action on the simplification program.

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Boxed elastic webbing was reduced from 11 widths to 7, and rubber sizes used in this product from 8 to 3 by vote of a general conference held in the Department of Commerce on May 22. This program was strongly endorsed by representatives of department and retail dry goods stores who see opportunities to reduce stocks of a perishable commodity.

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Existing variations of size of wood office desks and tables are being surveyed, a simplification of manufacturers, office executives, purchasing agents, distributors and others having begun work on June 2. Steel furniture will not be included in this survey.

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Mr. A.E. Foote, assistant chief of the Division, is in Europe for three months, during which, in addition to serving as a delegate to the International Chamber of Commerce in Brussels, he will study the progress of simplification in other countries.

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Representatives of the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Canners Association, the American Seed Trade Association and others met on May 28 to consider simplifying nomenclature of seeds. More than 14,000 varietal names are used for but 1,000 actual and distinct varieties of vegetables, it was said. The Departments of Commerce and of Agriculture are to cooperate with the seed trade and canners associations and the Vegetable Growers Association to determine the varieties representing the major proportion of the demand.

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Reduction of the existing variety of tire sizes is favored by 12 makers of passenger automobiles, 5 automobile clubs, 12 manufacturers of motor trucks, 34 pneumatic tire makers, 5 wheel and rim manufacturers, and 53 other manufacturers of chains, covers, display racks, repair molds, rim tools, etc.

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